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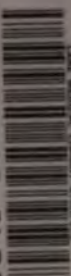
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FREDERICK IRVING KNIGHT

Memorial

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A MEMORIAL
OF
FREDERICK IRVING KNIGHT

BY
D. BRYSON DELAVAN



NEW YORK, N. Y.
1909



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FREDERICK IRVING KNIGHT, M. D.
May 18th, 1841 — February 20th, 1909

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DR. FREDERICK IRVING KNIGHT.

The subject of this memorial was born in Newburyport, Mass., May 18, 1841. He was a son of Frederick Knight and Anne Goodwin, his wife. His early education was received at the Newburyport High School. He entered Yale College in 1858, became a member of D. K. E. and of the senior society, "Scroll and Key," and after a particularly praiseworthy career was graduated in 1862. As an undergraduate he gave the impression to his classmates of a genial, earnest, high-minded young man, fond of his friends, a fair scholar, but not yet having come visibly to his own. Apparently he had already begun to look toward his profession, for it is said of him that he showed unusual interest in the Soldiers' Hospital—it was during the Civil War—and spent so much time in helping to watch and nurse the patients there that he was often spoken of as "Doctor" Knight. In 1866 Yale gave him the degree of A. M. Having finished his academic course at New Haven, he entered the Harvard Medical School, from which he was graduated in 1866. He then entered the City Hospital, of Boston, where he passed the usual time as interne, and upon graduating went to New York City. There he associated himself with the late Professor Austin Flint, with whom he remained and studied for one year. At this time his real nature became apparent, for when it came to the acquirement of an education in medicine he was most earnest and serious minded. The attachment between Dr. Flint and himself was a particularly cordial one, so much so that Dr. Knight was strongly urged to continue his association with Dr. Flint and to remain permanently in New York. The prospect of a brilliant career thus opened to him in the metropolis, and under the patronage of one of the ablest and strongest men of his time, must have offered a temptation difficult to resist. Dr. Knight's parents, however, were still living and at Newburyport, and this tie together with the acquaintanceships and associations which he had already made in New England, induced him finally to decline Dr. Flint's proposition

and he decided to return to Boston. This he did and at once became the assistant of the late Dr. Henry I. Bowditch (Harvard, 1828), which partnership was continued for twelve years.

Meanwhile in 1871-1872 Dr. Knight spent a year abroad at Vienna, Berlin and London, under the personal instruction of the best masters of the day. Thus, it will be seen that his education was broad and liberal and that few specialists of his time entered the field equipped with a better knowledge of general medicine or a more accurate idea of the detail work of his department, gained from such masters as Bowditch, Flint, von Schroetter and others, from among the most accomplished and distinguished authorities then living.

From the beginning he had devoted his attention to diseases of the chest and the upper air passages, and having perfected his knowledge of these subjects as far as was possible he returned to Boston and entered upon their active practice.

The story of Dr. Knight's professional career is essentially the history of our specialty in New England. Laryngology was first taught in the Harvard Medical School as a part of clinical medicine. It was taught as a special subject first in 1866 by Dr. H. K. Oliver, one of the visiting physicians of the Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1872 Dr. F. I. Knight, while in Europe, was made "Instructor in Percussion, Auscultation and Laryngoscopy," and on his return established a clinic in New England to include Laryngology. Instruction in this branch was largely limited to teaching the methods of examination. Diseased conditions received attention only incidentally. Daily sessions of the class were held for two weeks. There was no examination. Courses for graduates were added the next year. In 1879, after seven years of such instruction, Percussion and Auscultation were separated from Laryngology and the title of the Teacher became that of Instructor in Laryngology. In 1880 Harvard established a voluntary fourth year. Dr. Knight gave a course to the class of that year, consisting of three exercises a week for two months. The instruction was both clinical and didactic, and was followed by a written examination. In 1882 he was made Assistant Professor and in 1886 Clinical Professor. Associated with him as instructor was Dr. Franklin H. Hooper. By this time not only were the methods of examination taught, but the whole field of diseases

was covered by systematic lectures, by demonstrations and by the clinical use of patients.

Although in the full prime of life and at a period when his mental and physical powers were in every respect at their best, he resigned this position in 1892 in order to allow of the appointment to it of his friend, Dr. Franklin H. Hooper, who had for some time aspired to attain it.

In the experience of the writer the high-minded unselfishness of this act stands without a parallel. Dr. Hooper in reality was hopelessly ill. It was not likely that his life would be prolonged sufficiently for him to occupy the place for any great length of time. It was equally probable that if Dr. Knight resigned the position he would not take it up again. Under the circumstances then the relinquishment of it meant everything to him. It was a final test of friendship and in it was shown the greatness of heart and of mind which distinguished the man whose whole life was filled with a series of just such evidences of genuine nobility of character.

Dr. Knight was connected at various times with the Boston City Hospital, the Boston Dispensary and the Carney Hospital, but resigned these positions in 1872 to establish a special clinic in laryngoscopy at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He was also Consulting Physician to the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Free Home for Consumptives and the Sharon Sanatorium.

While abroad he was married in Berlin, October 15, 1871, to Miss Louisa Armistead Appleton, daughter of William Stuart Appleton, formerly of Baltimore, Maryland. He is survived by one child, Theodora Knight, now Mrs. G. K. B. Wade, of New York City, and by a granddaughter, Miss Ruth Wade.

Dr. Knight was one of the founders of the American Laryngological Association, and he was present at the meeting in Buffalo held June 3, 1878, at which the Association was organized. From the earliest moment of the inception of the Association he was a leading spirit and throughout his long connection with it one of its most enthusiastic and valuable members. He was rarely absent from its meetings, but whether present or not his influence was always powerful and salutary.

At the first annual meeting of the Association held in New

York City, June 10, 1879, the first scientific contribution presented was the paper of Dr. Knight on "Retro-Pharyngeal Sarcoma." The first committee appointed by the Association included him as a member. The object of the committee was the furtherance of a more definite organization of the Society and the establishing of a scientific nomenclature for the diseases of the upper air passages. At this meeting he was also appointed a member of the first nominating committee and for many years afterward was re-elected to the same position. During the temporary absence of Dr. Elsberg, the first President, Dr. Knight was appointed Temporary Chairman.

His contributions to its discussions evinced the highest order of scientific excellence and were therefore always welcomed. They were wise and scholarly and were offered with a modesty fully appreciative of the value of the views of others, but with a dignity born of experience and careful thought.

In the councils of the Association he was invaluable. Indeed, during that period of his career when the diverse elements which had united in its formation had not yet become thoroughly amalgamated and when conflicting interests and ambitions at times assumed proportions which threatened the Society's welfare, much of the success of the Association was due to Dr. Knight, through whom, more than through any other one man, wise policies were adopted and order maintained.

Dr. Knight was elected third president of the Association and the meeting was held in Boston, beginning June 12th, 1882. His presidential address dealt with the subject of instruction of students in the department of laryngology. In reading it over to-day, one cannot help being impressed by the wisdom of its suggestions, which now, after thirty years, have remained practically unchallenged.

In 1880 was founded the *Archives of Laryngology*, a magazine devoted to the study of diseases of the upper air passages. The editorial staff was composed of four of the leading laryngologists of the time, namely, Louis Elsberg, J. Solis-Cohen, George M. Lefferts and Frederick I. Knight. Among its collaborators were such men as Morell Mackenzie, *facile princeps*, Krishaber, Vololini, Labus, Burow, Foulis, Oertel and Zaverthal. While this journal was so far in advance of the times that its career was

terminated at the end of four years, it remains to-day the most elegant and best edited periodical on laryngology that has ever appeared. Under such management as controlled it and with the vastly increased number of specialists in the field there is no doubt that to-day it would be an acknowledged success.

Dr. Knight was a pioneer in the movement against tuberculosis. Fifteen years ago he became deeply interested in the subject and devoted much time and energy to its furtherance, especially through the medium of the American Climatological Association. His services to and through this society constitute an important contribution, and it is probable that they have been richly productive of valuable and lasting results.

When Governor Greenhalg was considering the establishment of a State Institution for the treatment of consumption in Massachusetts, he consulted Dr. Knight, and it was largely through his advice that Rutland was established. In fact, with this, as with other philanthropic interests, he was always ready and willing to give his counsel and assistance towards the advancement of the public good. He was constantly engaged in the warfare against tuberculosis, both in his own city and State and throughout the country. One of his last contributions to the literature of this subject was a paper read by him at the International Congress on Tuberculosis, held in Washington last September. This, like all of his papers, attracted much attention for its sound common sense and conservative judgments.

Dr. Knight was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, ex-president of the American Laryngological Association and of the American Climatological Association and also of the Boston Society for Medical Improvement. He was a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society and also of the St. Botolph and University Clubs.

Personally, Dr. Knight was by nature, as well as by lifelong training and association, a man of distinct superiority. Every attribute which he possessed, whether physical, mental or moral, indicated that superior quality of good breeding which seems only to come to those whose forebears have been gently reared, of stainless integrity and capable of successfully accepting the responsibilities and the honors of high social and professional life. Osler might have made him his model in writing "Æqui-

nimitas." Knowing the man himself, it would not surprise us to find that in following back his ancestral line his name had originated not in any matter of fancy, but in veritable and substantial fact.

Physically he was a man of distinguished presence, bright, attractive countenance, with well-chiselled features. His expression was radiant with intelligence and geniality, clearly reflecting the purity of his heart and the frank honesty of his purpose. Few have better deserved the confidence and appreciation of wisely discriminating friends, and few, indeed, have been more widely and heartily accorded it. From the beginning of his career Dr. Knight was everywhere welcomed among those whose good opinions were most worth having and whose social standing was actually the best.

With him every additional talent, every accession of influence was but another instrument with which to increase his efficiency in those fields of philanthropic work, which, up to the very end, he so unselfishly and so earnestly cultivated.

Devoted to the interests of those individuals who sought his advice and care, he was no less generous with his energy and time to the general medical and charitable interests of the State. In these he was an able leader, a counsellor of ripe experience and of sound judgment.

His career seems to have been one of singular evenness. As far as one may judge, no overwhelming misfortune, temptation or trial ever fell to his lot. On the contrary, he was able to work out a high degree of success under conditions that appeared ideal. No one acquainted with him was ever other than his staunch friend.

Thus, in brief, we have traced the outlines of a life well endowed with rare personal qualities, replete with opportunity for the betterment of humanity promptly recognized and vigorously embraced, full of those traits which cause us to love and honor the possessor and to regard him as truly great.

His life was like the story of a day in June, for its atmosphere was throughout genial, its hours perfection and not until its matchless sunset came the end, an end peaceful, beautiful, gentle, the exquisite finish of a perfectly rounded career.

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